1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

LAND AND PROPERTY

Title of land is a very delicate subject, consequently my information is scanty and unsystematic. Land which was once freely given away, has now become most valuable on account of the price of copra. To put an end to the quarrels that arose out of land, the Government appointed a Lands Commission to settle the claims. But the method of public inquiry so well adapted to the outspoken British temperament, is quite unsuited to a people who will on no account contradict a chief or a person of quality, and whose great weakness, as they themselves acknowledge, is "Fijian shame" (*mandua vakaviti*), an unconquerable aversion to haggling, disputing, or of saying no to a kinsman.

The lands in the valleys (*soso*) are held in common by the clan; any member of the clan can plant in clan lands without leave, but a stranger may not.

The lands on the coast formerly belonged to the "sides of the oven." The rents on certain leases are still paid to the "side of the oven." In the reign of Taliai Tupou, Maafu the Tongan, who virtually ruled Lau, divided the land individually among all the adults; those who were children at the time received no land, so they shared that of the father or brother. The eldest controls (*lewa*) the land, arranging about the planting, deciding where each brother should have his garden, and directing the work. Land is held in common also by more distant kinsmen, but under the control of one man.

It is not true then to say that there is individual ownership of property in Lau. The only result of the division has been that the land instead of being held in common by the clan, is now held in common by groups each representing descendants of one who was adult at the time of the division.

It is vain to look for definite rules of succession or any other acquirement of land. A clan forms one vast family where land matters are "discussed as between kinsmen"; and there is much begging, and conceding. It often happens that a man cannot tell why a certain man holds a piece of land, because it is a private arrangement. Nor can they always say what will become of the land after the owner's death.

Adopted children do not inherit land unless there are no offspring. The heirs may, however, decide to let the adopted child get land.

Women do not own land. The son-in-law of the only survivor of Tuware had to bring presents to his father-in-law in order to have permission to take his land. The head of a clan held that it would be right for him to provide land for a spinster or the wife of a man of another clan if she were a widow, for widows return to their clan. Women can, however, get land by

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

arrangement. Thus Taraivosa got the land of her father, Mburua of Natokatoka, for her son; Mburua on his death had given it to one Tokai of Vatuwangga; when Tokai died it passed to Rasolo, also of Vatuwangga, who was "brother" to Tokai; Taraivosa begged the land for her son, and Rasolo promised to give it as soon as her son began to pay taxes.

A man gets land through his mother if he comes to live with his mother's people.

Though in some cases it looks at first sight as though land had passed out of the clan, this does not actually happen. Thus Joshua and his people lived on land which his father had begged from Lemaki, the hereditary carpenter; but Lemaki holds land from the nobles only so long as he lives in Lakemba. Tiope of the clan of Ndaulakemba in Levuka held the land of Osea of the clan of Manukuira, because they had lived together, and Tiope was working off Osea's debts; nevertheless the land was spoken of as belonging to Osea's son, a boy of about thirteen.

If a member of the clan dies without issue his land reverts to his "edge of the oven." Ratu Finau however had all the edges of the oven put down as one in the Lands Enquiry so that now the land reverts to Katumbalevu as a whole.

It was definitely laid down that land could not go out of the clan except as *wa ni kuna*, the strangling rope, *ka ni mbula*, the price of life, or as *i thovithovi ni ndraundrau*, the wherewithal to pluck leaves for plates. The strangling rope is land given to kinsmen of a deceased nobleman's wife for strangling her at his death. The price of life is land given by a man to one who has saved his life. The wherewithal to pluck leaves is land given away as a woman's dowry; the land is supposed to keep her supplied with banana and breadfruit leaves on which to place the food. Such land is also called *i kaukau ni alewa* (that which is brought with a woman).

It was indeed said that a lady marrying a "small man" would also bring a dowry, and I know of one such case where the father of a lady of Naivi gave some land when she married a man of Levuka; the land is now held by the man's son. But this does not appear to be a common practice, for I was told that the reason why a lady does not bring land to the "landsmen" is that her people have no land to give. The Chief of Nasangalau says the same of his village: the nobles there had no land but what they got from other clans through their mothers.

A nobleman will sometimes perform what is called *vakalutulutu*, causing to fall; this is a present of manufactured articles to his son's maternal uncles, in order to "make the land fall"—that is, to get land for his son. Meli, the head of Naivi, thus got land from his mother's clan, Tumbou;

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

others got land in this way from Narewandamu. A sister's son may not seize land by right of *vasu* (*vasuta*); he can only get it by "causing to fall."

Of old, Matailakemba, Vatuwangga, and the rest had each their strangers from Totoya, from Tonga, and other parts. A stranger got land from the edge of the oven to which he was attached; when he died it went back to the clan. Since the Lands Commission has been inaugurated, this is no longer possible, as the Tongans have been grouped together as a side of the oven; the land is therefore lost to the four groups of nobles and remains with the Tongans. There are some Solomon Islanders now living in Tanggalevu and treated as members of the clan. In olden times, a nobleman would beg a bit of land to plant in, and when the food was mature he would share it with the owner.

Some Europeans take the view that the land belongs to the chiefs; this is a claim made by some of the chiefs and nobles. Ratu Finau claims that all the land as far as Ono is the property of the Sau. "It belongs to the Chief: God appointed him."

Salesi, a nobleman (Pl. I, *A*) expressed the following opinion concerning a disputed land:

> Navutoka properly belongs to Thekena. It belongs to Katumbalevu in so far as the nobles have smitten Thekena; but it is not right for the chiefs to oppress the people. Some people imagine they are chiefs by themselves and forget that, but for the landsmen, they would not be chiefs. The present nobility owe much to Yandrana because the nobles used to invade Lakemba from Yandrana[18] and Yandrana and Natokalau took their part against Thekena. A chief is apt to forget that the ancients of Yandrana and Natokalau died for their sakes.

Joshua, a nobleman, says, "The chief only disposed of what was brought to them. He did not dispose of the land; each owner disposed of his own."

Semi of Tanggalevu says,

> The nobles of old had no land; they had only the authority (*lewa*); it is only since the Tongan rule and the Government that it extends to the soil. They could not take land; only the sister's son could bring land to the nobles; the elders of the landsmen (*matua kai vanua*) would decide to give land for their sister's son to plant in. The nobles used to refer to us landsmen. Land would be provided for strangers by Envoy to Mbau, Envoy to Thithia (that is Thekena), and the Lord of Tumbou. If Roko Taliai wanted land for the people of Levuka he would say, "Tui Tumbou, let it be your part to provide taro land for the Levuka people to plant in." And the land was given. To Envoy to Mbau he would say, "Give some land to the Tongans." He did not dispose of it; he referred it to the old men.

CHATTELS

All property other than land is called either food (*kakana*) or manufactured articles (*i yau*). These two categories are continually opposed to

[18] When they came over from Naiau to conquer Lakemba.

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

of Tchosaia, married Tangatanga, the sister of Lutumailangi, who was the father of Manoa.

The Matandravu subclan, according to its pedigree, is descended from Sovuthe, a younger brother of Lutumailangi and Tangatanga of Vuanitavola, who went to Komo. A few of his descendants now live in Tokalau. Matandravu formerly held the hereditary clan title of chief of Tokalau.

The clan Katoka is composed of two subclans: Katoka and Saumua. For several years each has received a share in the feast, and they are in the process of separating into two clans. The Katoka group holds the titles of herald and chief of crops to the chief of Kambara. Katoka is the oldest clan in the village and owns more land than either of the other clans.

In Tokalau the old hamlet grouping of clans has been obscured because the village has expanded in order to allow space between the houses. The original plan of the village may be seen in the oldest section, called Nakoro (the village) at the south end of Tokalau (fig. 3; table 1). Here the three clans lived in local units. According to informants, Vuanikathu occupied the south end of the old village. The clan lived in a group of houses, the foundations of which may be seen southeast of Vale Levu, the house of the chief of Kambara (fig. 3, 1). This is still the main village site of the clan. Vuanitavola clan occupied its present site north of Vuanikathu. The Katoka clan lived between Vuanitavola and the cliffs. The old ceremonial ground was centrally located between the houses of the headmen of the noble clans. Recently the village has expanded under government regulation toward the north. The new section is called Koro Vou (New Village). It is divided into three strips running from cliff to shore and occupied from south to north by Katoka, Vuanikathu, and Vuanitavola clans respectively. The new ceremonial ground is located on the border between the old and the new villages.

The government house in Tokalau (fig. 3, 26) was built by the people of Kambara, Namuka, and Komo and is the property of the three islands. The church and the minister's house (fig. 3, 10) are on Vuanitavola land but are considered the property of the mission. The store and copra sheds (fig. 3, 25), also on Vuanitavola land, have been leased to a Chinese trading company.

LOMATCHI

There are three clans in the village of Lomatchi: Nakaka, Nawi, and Levuka. The people of Lomatchi know little of their pedigrees, but apparently all the clans in Lomatchi belong to the land phratry. The Nakaka clan-hamlet, situated in the center of the village, holds the highest rank.

The Nawi clan pedigree shows that Nawi was formerly composed of two subclans, Nawi and Lomatchi. The Lomatchi branch is now called Nawi. The subclan Nawi was started by Loweni and Kani, who came to Lomatchi about

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

minimum of effort. Little new land is cleared, though clearing land on the forest-free, volcanic islands does not require the labor involved in clearing the thick jungles of the limestone islands.

Land Ownership and Inheritance

A government land commission is engaged in the difficult task of surveying the land in Fiji and establishing native land titles. Fortunately, at the time of my visit the commission had not reached southern Lau and titles to the land had not been disturbed or legalized. However, land ownership is complicated by the changes made in the system of ownership after the Tongan conquest of the chiefdom of Lakemba. Moreover, there is rivalry between some clans regarding land ownership, especially if there is any doubt as to claims. The genealogical method was found invaluable in working out problems of land ownership and inheritance.

The land is divided into three classes: garden land (*nggele*), village land (*yavu*), and bush (*lekutu*). Natural demarcations—trees, rocks, and creeks—are used to define boundaries.

The hamlet system of land ownership (p. 35) is clearly seen on Mothe. The somewhat circular island, rising gradually from the shore lowlands to a central ridge, is divided into pie-shaped sections, extending from the center to the shore. Each section is owned by a clan and bears the same name as the clan. The sections contain hamlet sites, which the natives claim were formerly occupied by the proprietary clans. Even today, although all the clans live in clan-hamlets in the two adjacent villages of Nasau and Korotolu in south Mothe, the old divisions are observed, each clan confining its gardening, collecting, trapping, and fishing to its own section. Each clan also owns its own hamlet site within the village.

Under the Tongan system the garden land and the village lots were owned by the clans, and the bush was free. Fishing rights in the lagoons were divided between the villages adjacent to them. The Tongans did not change the ownership or the names of the garden and village land. The land was measured in fathoms by using a piece of sennit (*mangimangi*). According to informants, a piece of land was called *mangimangi*. For instance, land belonging to the Vuanikathu clan was called *mangimangi ki Vuanikathu*.

The Tongan system may be illustrated by the land division on Kambara. The garden lands of several clans form a geographic unit and every clan division has a name. The clan garden land as a whole has a name. The clan village land forms a unit unless the old division has been obscured by the expansion of the village or the clan. This is also named. The clan land is administered by the clan headman. There is no fixed rule regarding the division of the clan land. It is usually divided between the subclans. Plots

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

423 tend to remain within the subclan but if it dies out its lands revert to the clan. Every male born within it inherits a right to use part of the clan lands, which are not transferable. Usually he receives his share of land when he marries. However, a bachelor who has his own men's house has his own land. He contributes the produce from his gardens to the group with which he eats. Before receiving his own land a young man works his father's land under his father's supervision.

Often the male *veitathini* (brothers and parallel cousins) of one generation in a subclan work the land jointly under the supervision of the first-born. The land division between *veitathini* is not fixed, but each works a piece with the help of his sons.

423 427 Land ownership is further complicated by the *kerekere* system (pp. 207-208). Unused plots are often borrowed. If a man wants more land he goes either to the clan headman or to an individual who is not using all his land and solicits the use of it. If his request is granted he may be given it in usufruct for a definite or an indefinite length of time. In return he delivers a portion of [177] the crop, called *i thava ni vanua*, as rent to the owner. The natives say that the payment of rent is recent and was introduced by the Tongans.

The only surviving male of the subclan Naitathini of Vuanikathu, Tokalau, is Tchitoko, aged about ten years. Before Tchitoko's father died he appointed Tchuta of Mbete subclan of the same clan as guardian to Tchitoko (*i solosolo i Tchitoko*). The guardian works Tchitoko's land and provides the boy with kilts. He has rented part of the land to Naivotavota clan, Nggalinggali, which presents to the boy part of each harvest as rent. Tchitoko will take over the use of the Naitathini land when he is old enough to work it.

423 To procure the use of land outside his clan, a man turns to his mother's clan. His *vasu* (sister's son) rights do not include appropriation of land without permission. To use a house site in the hamlet of his mother, for instance, a man makes his request to his mother's brother without the ceremonial presentation of property. His mother's brother says, "Please yourself. It's yours. Pick out what you want." If, however, his mother's clan has no suitable site, his mother's clan goes to the clan of his mother's mother for a house site. The natives say that a man may solicit land from a clan to which he is not *vasu* by presenting a whale's tooth with his request, but this is rarely done. In cases of matrilocal residence usufruct often develops into inheritance on the part of the children, who become members of their mother's clan.

Since the bush is free, a man may take timber for houses, canoes, or woodwork from any part of the island. Such timber is called *kathu ni lekutu*. A man does not clear land just anywhere in the bush, although he is allowed [558] to do so. He goes to the bush land of his clan to make his clearing. Natives say that if he does not do so people will talk about him and he will lose face.

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

The natives collect fruits, and greens, hunt, and set traps only in the bush adjacent to their own villages.

Formerly, besides clearing land, a clan could acquire garden land by marriage, war, or by gift from a chief. Occasionally, when a woman of the lower class married a noble she brought a piece of land to his clan. This was called *sovisovi ni ndraundrau* (place to collect leaves.) The woman was responsible for gathering the daily supply of edible leaves. The land remained in the man's clan unless after his death his children were adopted by their mother's clan, when the land was returned with the children. If the children remained with their father's people, even though the widow went back to her people, the land was kept also. Sotchiana of Rasea clan, Fulanga, married Tchone of Vandravandra and brought a piece of land to her husband's clan. After his death she stayed with his clan and the clan kept the land. Vunise of Sau clan took a piece of land to Vunikoro when she married Lote. The land remained the property of Vunikoro. When Semitchi of Mbete subclan, Kambara, married Kalavu of Lomatchi, she brought a piece of land. Land is no longer acquired in this fashion. If one village conquered another the victors class married a noble she brought a piece of land to his clan. This was called *ka ni mbula* (thing of life). Land was also given by one village to another in return for help in warfare, but it has been several generations since land has changed hands through warfare.

Today a clan may acquire the ownership of new garden land only by clearing bush. Newly cleared land belongs to the man who clears it. This means that it is used by him, his household, and his children. The clan has no right to deprive him of this land, though the land is considered to be the property of the clan. If the land is cleared by the combined labor of a subclan its use belongs to the subclan.

Small, uninhabited islands are also clan owned. The clan claims exclusive ownership of all the land and fishing rights of its island. For example, the Naivotavota clan of Kambara claims ownership of Wangava; clans of Undu village own the island of Marambo; Vuanitavola clan owns the island of Tavunasithi; the islands of the central Fulanga lagoon belong to Nasava and Vandravandra clans and to Muanaira and to Naivindamu villages.

Cultivated fruit trees in the village—such as breadfruit, Tahitian chestnut, banana, and *ndawa*—belong to the man who plants them, and no one but the owner is allowed to pick the fruit. Fruit trees are inherited from father to son. If a tabu has been declared on the fruit crop, the owner of the fruit trees is not allowed to pick the fruit until after the first fruits' ceremony. If the owner's right over the fruit of his trees is not respected he marks them tabu by tying a coconut leaf round the trunk. This is called *tambu*. It serves to check but does not eliminate pilfering of ripe fruit by children during the

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

423 [674] day and by adults on dark nights. Mango trees are especially molested by trespassers.

On Fulanga each clan owns two trees, a *tarai* and a *mbau*, located in the bush. These trees are called *mbilita* (that is, *mbilita ni matanggali Vunikoro-mbilita* of the Vunikoro clan, etc.), and each has a name. They belong exclusively to the proprietary clan and only members of that clan are allowed to pick the fruit. The names of the *tarai* trees belonging to the clans of Muanaithake village are: Tarainanga of Vunikoro; Ulumburu of Rasea; Luvenimbumbu of Vandravandra; Kawakawaloa of Nasava; and Taraimbalavu of Sau. The ground around the *mbilita* is kept free of bush and weeds. A stone circle is built around the *mbau mbilita* and the *mbau* fruits are picked green, thrown into the enclosure, covered with leaves, and allowed to ripen. A ditch, called *ovaova*, is dug around the trunk of the *tarai mbilita* but the fruit is allowed to ripen on the tree. According to the natives, the *mbilita* custom came about in the following way. In olden days when a man found a good *mbau* or *tarai* tree, he cleared the ground around the trunk and the tree became the *mbilita* of his clan or of his household. Today there are no *mbilita* belonging [184] to households. I did not find the *mbilita* custom on other islands. The Kambarans had never heard of it.

Fishing rights are village property. The lagoons of an island are divided by the adjacent villages, and for inhabitants of one village to use the ground of another village without permission means loss of prestige. Fishponds and equipment used in village communal fishing are village property.

Water holes and communally built reservoirs, located in the village, are owned by the village and used by its inhabitants. Water holes located in the bush are usually free. There is a dispute regarding the ownership of Wai Mariko, a fresh water hole near Tokalau, which is claimed by two clans, Vuanitavola and Vuanikathu. The village cemetery belongs to the village but each clan has a lot in it.

Moveable Property

422 *I yau* is a native classification of property which may be defined as moveable property. The natives are not quite sure just what the term includes. When they speak of *i yau* they think mainly of craft goods such as mats, tapa, woodwork, coconut oil, sennit, and canoes. They say whales' teeth are also *i yau* but usually mention them separately. Pigs, fowl, turtles, and food (*kakana*) are also classed as *i yau* but the natives are not sure whether houses should be included.

422 556 436 The most valuable objects in Lau are whales' teeth. They serve as a means by which wealth may be accumulated, condensed, stored, and exchanged. The value of other objects cannot be expressed in terms of whales' teeth, thus they

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

CHAPTER IV

THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

BLOOD AND SOIL

Nonggui tau,
Solia nonggu yau.

My friend.
Give me some property.[27]

423 IN LAU the basic landowning unit is the clan. The land is divided into three classes: garden land, village land, and bush. The natives say that according to the pre-Tongan system of tenure in Lau each hamlet owned a part of each class of land. This system is found on the island of Mothe, which is divided into sections shaped like pieces of pie, each containing bush, garden, and village land. Each section was formerly owned and occupied by a hamlet and is still owned by the same group, which is now a clan in one of the two villages of the island. After the Tongan conquest, according to informants, on some islands clan titles were established to the garden and village land only and the bush was considered free. The post-Tongan system is found on the island of Kambara.

423 648 One of the most important policies of the British administration in Fiji has been the protection of native land ownership. Before annexation, white settlers in Fiji had acquired large areas of land (about 414,615 acres) from the native chiefs, but since 1875 practically all sale of native land, except to the government for specific purposes, has been prohibited. Tenure has been granted only by leaseholds, which may extend up to 99 years for agricultural purposes. In 1936 only about one-fifth (863,211 acres) of the total area of the colony (4,523,620 acres) had been alienated by sales and leases.[28]

[27] Thomas Williams and J. Calvert, *Fiji and the Fijians*, London, 1858, Vol. I, p. 118.
[28] *Annual Report*, Fiji, 1936, p. 70.

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

Since 1912 the native lands commission has been working on the difficult task of establishing native land titles. The native lands commission, through the native lands ordinance of 1905, is charged with the duty of ascertaining what lands in each province are the rightful and hereditary property of native Fijian owners, and whether the ownership is by clan or by some other division or sub-division of the group. The commission consists of a European chairman and two native chiefs of high rank, one of whom is Ratu Sukuna, the district commissioner of Lau.[29] When I visited Lau the commission had not yet begun work in the southern islands and native land titles had not yet been established in this area. Hence the old native system was undisturbed.

As a result of the government land policy no lands in southern Lau,[30] which offers little except copra production to encourage European settlement, have been alienated except village lots leased by trading companies in Suva for trade stores. In the area surveyed there were just three stores, one in Tokalau on Kambara, one on Namuka and one on Mothe. There were no Europeans living in southern Lau, and the only residents other than natives or half-castes found in the area surveyed were the Chinese who ran these stores and a Japanese family on Namuka.[31]

The emphasis on land laid by the land laws and the inquiries of the native lands commission have sharpened the native's evaluation of his hereditary lands. This is heightened in southern Lau by the scarcity of good garden land and the high value of native hardwoods which grow in the jungle.

[29] The members have the power to summon and examine under oath persons whom they think able to give information concerning land under investigation, and to require attendance of all persons claiming or interested in the land. The decision of the commission is final unless appeal is made within sixty days of the announcement of the decision to the governor. The lands are surveyed at the cost of the proprietary unit. By 1936 3,539,307 acres had been surveyed. (*Annual Report*, Fiji, 1936, p. 71.)

[30] The term "southern Lau" is used to denote the islands of the Lau group south of Lakemba, exclusive of the Moala group.

[31] This information, obtained in the year 1933-34, is substantiated by the 1936 census.

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

423 754 On our first visit to one of the Kambaran villages the natives were suspicious because they had heard that we wanted to take away their land and build a sawmill to export hardwood. This they feared because the land titles had not yet been established by the lands commission. One night most of the inhabitants of the village crowded into my native house. About midnight when they had all left, we noticed through the darkness two men (whom we recognized as two high ranking persons in the village) a few yards from the house. They were describing a circle on the ground. When they disappeared we examined the spot and found a piece of pandanus, knotted in the form of a cross, lying in the center of the circle. We found the pandanus had been extracted from the mat on which we had been sitting.

754 The next night, when the natives had again assembled in the house, we showed the pandanus and asked what it was. Suddenly there was a silence. The dark faces became serious and frightened. Finally a hereditary carpenter, who had been educated for the ministry in a mission school, said: "It's a bad trick." The two men had been so afraid of losing the land that they had practised black magic on us.

754 431 621 Since the practise of witchcraft is forbidden by the native regulations the whole village was upset, and the next day the natives ceremonially presented to us a large sea turtle, weighing over 150 pounds, in atonement. This was the most valuable gift they could give. We returned with the turtle, lying on its back so that it was helpless, aboard our canoe to Tokalau, whereupon Tokalau, not to be outdone by its rival, immediately presented us with a still larger turtle.

423 578 Jealousy over land titles reached its highest point regarding the valuable, uninhabited island of Wangava. This island with its rich timber and garden land, fishing and turtle breeding grounds, is claimed by a noble clan (Naivotavota) of Tanggu. A noble clan (Vuanikathu) of Tokalau also claims the west side of the island, but acknowledges the Tanggu

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

clan's claim to the east side. However, the Tanggu clan enforces its claim by actual cultivation of crops on the island and by control of the fishing and turtle breeding there. But since such a claim is substantiated not only by tenure but also through the clan genealogies there was a constant dispute among nobles of Tanggu and Tokalau regarding their genealogies and the relative merits of the two claims.

The effect of the government policy concerning land ownership has been far-reaching. Native retention of ancestral lands has cemented the tie between hereditary social groups and the soil. A man cultivates the garden plot of his ancestors and frequently even builds his house upon the same house site. In spite of the changes taking place in the culture the link with the natural environment has not been broken. This has not only physical significance in that the natural resources upon which the old culture was built are still available, but also psychic significance in that a social group is still in close contact with its sacred places, sacred animals, and plants. The importance of this condition can hardly be over-emphasized. As long as the physical setting is retained there is a possibility of revitalizing a culture so that a satisfactory balance may be re-established in spite of its changing content. Evidence of new adjustment to the old environment is seen in the increase of the population in recent years—a sign of healthy and socially adjusted communal life which will be discussed in Chapter VI.

As a result of the land policy the native does not suffer from the modern western economic system. He is economically independent and does not need to compete with Europeans or Indians[32] in the struggle for existence. No matter how he chooses to earn his living he can always return to his own village and cultivate his ancestral lands. Hence there is no native unemployment or rehabilitation problem in Fiji.

[32] Since 1879, laborers have been imported into Fiji from India, and in 1936 the total Indian population in Fiji was 85,002. There are, however, no Indians in southern Lau.

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

working the soil. It tends, however, to discourage attempts to improve gardening technics and it also tends to keep the population at subsistence level. Instead of devising ways of acquiring a surplus of food, by means of production or trade, to be fermented and stored against drought or hurricane, the natives feel they need not bother since the government will come to their aid with rice and flour in case of hurricane or famine. Hence the chief administrative problem regarding the land in southern Lau is how to stimulate interest and initiative in cultivating the soil. This problem will be discussed in the next section and in Chapter VII.

In parts of Fiji desirable for settlement, the government policy of protection of native lands has made possible the development of a class of native landlords who live idly off the rents from their lands. It has also had a marked effect on the economic development of the colony, for many native owners of commercially valuable land refuse to lease any of their holdings, even though they actually use but a small part for their gardens or plantations. The difficulties of acquiring land for settlement have been so great that they have actually discouraged or prevented settlement.

The deadlock over land in Fiji has been the serious concern of the administration for many years. In an attempt to meet the problem the great council of chiefs, which met in 1936, passed the following resolution: "That in the opinion of this Council it is to the best interests of the native race that all lands (including leases) not required for the maintenance of the Fijian owners be opened for settlement; that to further this end a committee be appointed to inquire into and determine the amount of land needed for the proper development by the native owners; and that all land (including leases) not so required be handed over to the government to lease on behalf of the Fijians."[33]

The acceptance of this recommendation by the legislative

[33] *Annual Report*, Fiji, 1936, p. 59.

3: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934) 1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Kambara

423 471 council would break the land deadlock in Fiji. Whether or not the measure would benefit the natives themselves would depend upon how wisely it was administered.

539 FOOD IS THE DAILY PROBLEM

Era vei talanoa, era nggoro
Wangga ni Mburotu ri ka sa na songgo
Uru tiko nai ndreke i na koro.
Nai mboi ni yasi kula, yasi ndromo,
Nai mboi ni mamba tu na mothelolo,
Nai mboi ni makita thuruoso
Ka laki mbotea na loma ni koro.

They were very much surprised
When we arrived in the Mburotu canoe
And anchored near the village.
The scent of red sandalwood, golden sandalwood,
The scent of *mamba* with *mothelolo,*
The scent of *makita*[34] creeps into the village
And fills it with fragrance.

From an ancient dance, Kambara.

773 261 THE KAMBARANS have a legend of Mburotu, the golden paradise isle of the departed, inhabited by extremely beautiful maidens with light skins like the Tongans. Mburotu is covered with fragrant plants and fruit trees on which the eternally ripe fruit hangs in golden clusters waiting to be picked. As soon as one fruit is picked another appears in its place. But Mburotu is only a wish fulfillment dream in striking contrast to the harsh reality of the everyday world. Food is still the immediate and daily recurring problem on the limestone islands (including Kambara) where garden land is scarce and natural resources limited. This is rendered more acute on account of the porous nature of the soil and lack of fresh water, which makes drought a frequent menace, and on account of devastating hurricanes which cause great destruction of crops and property.

[34] *Mamba, mothelolo,* and *makita* are sweet smelling plants.

13 4. The YANGASA CLUSTER (pronounced Yang'-a-saw) is made up of four small uninhabited limestone islands, within one lagoon 8 by 6 miles, protected by a subcircular barrier reef which has a two mile break on the north side. They lie about 12 miles north of Fulanga and Ongea Levu, the center of the lagoon being S.18° 56', 178° 29' W. The group is said to belong to the people of Mothe, who gather the copra from several small patches of cocoanut palms. [423] [245] [484]

YANGASA LEVU, the largest island of the cluster, is 1 2/3 by 1/2 mile, triangular in shape, with a central plateau, 390 feet high. The slopes and plateau are exceedingly rough and heavily wooded, but there is a comparatively level, smooth bench on the east side with a few cocoanut palms in addition to open woods. The west slope of the plateau rises percipitously from the water, but on the east the slope can be climbed in places. No beaches, but landing is possible on the west side of the south point, near which there is one small pool of nearly fresh water, surrounded by a grove of cocoanut palms.

MAVUTU-I-LOMA, the southern islet of the cluster, lies about 1 1/2 miles to the south-west of Yangasa Levu. It is irregularly oval in shape, 1/2 by nearly 1 mile. The surface is densely covered with lowland forest and for the most part exceedingly rough. On the N.E. side a ridge rises to a height of 210 feet. On the S.W. the land is low with deep bays choaked with mangrove swamps. The central portion is flat. A small bay with sandy beach offers good landing at the S.W. point. Opposite this bay the anchorage is good. There are other sand beaches and three small crescent shaped islets on the N.E. side.

YAVUTHA lies 1 1/2 miles to the N.W. of Mavutu-i-loma. Though little more than a quarter mile in diameter it reaches an elevation of 240 feet in a sharp peak on the S.E. It is densely wooded with the usual lowland forest and has quite a grove of Casuarina trees on

[p. 20]

13 14. AIWA ISLANDS. Two small uninhabited islands of upraised coral limestone, about 12 miles S.E. of Lakemba. (18° 20' S., 178° 41' W.). They are each about a mile long by 600 ~~yards~~ yards wide, lying in nearly a straight line, with their ends close together and connected by a sunken reef. An elongate barrier reef extends out from each side for 3 or 4 miles, being continuous across the south side, but reduced to broken patches and coral heads on the north. The islands rise abruptly from the water in rough undercut cliffs to a height of 150 to 200 feet, but they are comparatively flat and even on the tops.

Anchorage may be had on the N. side of the western island, there being a broad clear entrance to the lagoon on the N.W. Landing is good in a small sandy bay at the east end of the western islet. It is more difficult, but possible, on the eastern islet, in places along both the N. and S. sides, the latter being better at low tide.

There are numerous caves in the limestone walls, and one large broken in cavern in the east central portion of the western islet, at the bottom of which there is a pool of brackish water. There is no [312] fresh water on the islands except immediately after rains, when a little rainwater collects in open depressions.

The interior flats are covered with the usual lowland vegetation, open and park-like. There is a patch of introduced weeds and a few coconut palms near the sand beach on the western islet. On the eastern islet there is a small area of reed or nasau grass, with Pandanus trees. There is no cultivation.

[423] A flock of goats was placed on the islets by the late native owner, a chief residing on Lakemba. There are the usual birds, lizards, crabs and 484 snakes. The islands are occasionally visited for copra and goat hunting. 295 224

[p. 40]

361 161 [491] Lakemba has seven native villages, Tumbou being the largest one in Lau, with a population of 283. The others in order as one goes counter-clockwise along the well kept connecting road are:- Wathiwathi, on the east side of the south-jutting peninsula, 130 natives; Waitambu, three quarters of a mile to the east, 76 inhabitants; Nukununku at the S.E. corner of the island, at the head of a small bay, 70 natives; Yandrana, along the banks of a fair size stream, at the N.E. corner, 187 inhabitants; Vakano, about 2 miles to the N.W., 70 natives; and Nasanggalau, with 150 inhabitants, about a mile to the westward at the mouth of the next stream. The west end of the island, opposite the Wankatalatha anchorage, is privately owned. There is a small store, run by Chinese in nearly every village, and a large store run by the Lau Traders, Ltd., at Tumbou.

423 366 177

181 439 245 241 287 The inhabitants are thrifty, intelligent and industrious, drying and exporting a large quantity of copra. There are extensive cultivated areas containing yams, sweet potatoes, etc., in the valleys. Considerable masi (tapa) is made.

799 871 Lakemba was the first island in Fiji to be Christianized by British Missionaries (1853). The Provincial School, to which boys from all over Lau are sent, is situated near Tumbou.

[p. 43]

13 19. **KATAFANGA** (or Katavanga) is a small island of limestone and volcanic material, lying 23 miles S.E. of Munia and 19 miles N.N.E. of Tuvatha'. (S. 17° 51', 178° 43' W.) It is 3/4 mile long and 800 yards wide on the north, tapering toward the south, and rises in two rounded hills to a height of 180 feet. The northern third of the island is densely wooded, rough upraised coral limestone; the southern two-thirds, rounded volcanic material, covered with grass and groves of cocoanut palms. The transition between the two is the most striking seen in Lau, as sharp as if cut by a knife. The southern portion is bordered by a broad beach of sand and slab sandstone.

The island is surrounded by a barrier reef thru which there is a passage on the north side which will admit small vessels drawing 10 feet or less. This passage is not the eastern one, generally indicated on charts, but the narrow one directly north of the N.E. point of the island. In it there are two or three coral heads, but with a favorable tide and commanding breeze small vessels may enter. A desirable
361 anchorage is to be had off the S.E. side of the island, opposite the owner's house, where landing is good.

423 The island is freehold property, owned by Mr. T.O.U.Stockwell, who
245 lives on the island and is engaged in producing copra. There is no
464 native population other than his six workmen. Water may be obtained
312 together with small supplies of yams, sweet potatoes, papayas, pigs, etc.
262 Bird and insect life abundant on this luxurient little island. The
13 usual lizards and land crabs present in some numbers.

[p.51]

[THITHIA I.]

is the largest village, with 123 residents and a Chinese store. Natheva is a small village on the S.E., with 40 natives, and also has a little store. Natokalau, on the east side has 65 residents. Lomati, on the N.E., at the mouth of the large stream, is a propperous village with 113 residents and a large Chinese store. Mr. C.B.Crabbe, cocomut planter and postmaster, who lives here, also keeps a store, mainly for the convenience of his workmen. Two sections of the island, Tambuta on the west side and Yakindrauu on the east, are privately owned by the Borron Estate, under the management of Mr. E.J.Brodnam, who is interested in tropical agriculture and natural history. Here extensive groves of cocomuts have been set out and much copra is produced.

[p.61]

13 25. MANGO is a moderately large limestone and volcanic island, 8 miles south of Kanathea, 20 miles W.N.W. of Tuvutha', and 17 miles N.N.E. of Thithia. (S.17° 27', 179° 09' W.). It is surrounded by a fringing reef, about 1/2 mile wide. On the north there is a wide gap in the reef, forming an excellent anchorage with the prevailing S. to E. winds. The island is nearly circular, 3 miles in diamtere, and reaches an elevation (Mt.Rider) on the south of 730 feet according to the owner (the Pilot Book, H.O.166, p.372, gives 670 feet). Two other high volcanic hills overlook the west coast, and there is one nearly as high in the north ridge.

This marginal ring of hills, partly volcanic and partly of upraised coral limestone, encloses a broad central basin which is at present 245 thickly planted to coconut palms. It was formally used for the [248] cultivation of sugar cane, and prior to that for raising cotton. The [249] old sugar mill still stands near the owners houses, toward the center 361 of the basin. From it a small tram line runs to the N.E.bay. 491

The island is owned by Mr. James Borron, and is managed by his son. 423 There is no native population other than the workmen employed on the 469 plantation, which are mostly Indians. It is one of the most productive 162 and luxurient islands in Lau, and would be well worth an extended 13 biological survey. There is a dense forest among the limestone hills on the N.E., hanging with tropical vines, and with lianas up to 15 inches in diameter. The volcanic hills are covered with the usual grass and scrub, and here and there are groves of Casuarina trees. A small lake, in the N.W.gap, supports a flock of wild ducks, and other bird life is abundant.

312 Water is abundant. A large stream drains the central basin, flowing N.E. to the nearly enclosed bay. There are also several small lakes and pools of fresh water.

245 At present about 500 tons of copra are produced annually. A herd

13 26. KANATHEA is a circular island of volcanic material, 2 to 2 1/2 miles in diameter, lying 7 miles west of Vanua Mbalavu and 8 miles north of Mango. (S.17° 15', 179° 10' W.) It is surrounded by a fringing reef, and from the east side a loop of barrier reef extends about 6 miles to the N.E., enclosing a spacious lagoon. On the north [509] side there is an indentation in the shore reef within which small craft may anchor within a few hundred feet of a small wharf. The island is undulating and hilly, with several peaks of fair height, the highest (830') overlooking the N.W. shore. On the north-east rises a hill, on the S.E. side of which is a conspicuous thumb-like shaft of volcanic rock. The hills in several places rise in sheer cliffs of this material.

[312] Water is abundant, the interior being drained by several streams.

[245] The valley bottoms and more gradual slopes are thickly planted with coconut palms. The summits of the hills are partly wooded.

● 423 The island is privately owned and over 600 tons of copra are pro-
245 duced annually. 700 head of cattle are pastured and flocks of ~~hhh~~
233 turkeys roam the hills. In former times cotton and later sugar cane
136 were successfully grown. There is no native population, all the workmen
248
249 being Indians.
162 As bird life is carefully protected, insects are somewhat reduced in numbers. A strict quarentine is also maintained against weeds.

13

[p.66]

13 27. VANUA MBALAVU I. is situated at the western side of the lagoon containing the Exploring Isles. (S.17° 10' to S.17° 20', and 178° 55' to 179° 04' W.) It is 14 miles long and up to 2 1/2 miles wide, with several peaks along its backbone. The N.W.portion, including Ngillangilla I. (510'), which is separated from the main island by a narrow channel, is composed of upraised coral limestone. This continues to be the dominant material south and eastward as far as the two deep bays on the N.E.. On the east side of these the forested limestone cliffs are abruptly replaced by rounded grassy hills. These continue until close to the south end ~~&th~~ which is a narrow limestone ridge. The small islets to the N.W. are limestone. Yanu Yanu, on the S.E. is of volcanic material. The highest peak, Koro Mbasabga (930) and the summits of one or two other peaks of volcanic material are covered with an open growth of forest, similar to that on the high volcanic islands of Matuku, Moala, and Totoya.

361 All of the villages, about 14 in number, are located in the [423] volcanic portion of the island. Nambavatu, in the N.W., is a private estate. Several of the villages were not visited during our short stay, but their populations are tabulated under the Census of Lau.

[648] Lomaloma, with the residence of the District Commissioner, the [344] courthouse, a large native church and ~~&th~~ a few European homes, is [368] situated toward the S.E. end of the island. The northern half of the [177] village (Lomaloma) is Fijian; the southern half (called Sawana) is [563] Tongan, with a separate Buli (chief) and its own city government. The two parts have a combined population of 272. The harbor is well [13] protected, on the east by the islet of Yanu Yanu, and on the N. and S. by outjutting reefs, leaving a small natural basin. In former times [366] Lomaloma was a a large and commercially important place, with several [439] hotels and stores. To it came the old sailing vessels from all parts of the world after copra and native produce from all Lau. But with

13 Il. MUNIA is a small volcanic island, 2 1/4 miles long by 1500 yards wide, lying 3 1/2 miles E.by S. of Susui and 15 miles E.by N. of Mango. A high ridge traverses the island, reaching a height of 950 feet near the center. The island is surrounded by a fringing reef, which connects it with the south side of the barrier reef which surrounds the Exploring group. The island is entirely made up of volcanic material.

423 Munia is privately owned, by Mr. H.H. Steinmetz, an Englishman, who
162 produces copra. His homestead is located on the S.E.side at a place
295 where there is a small bight in the reef. Here a pier has been built
361 out nearly to deep water. Anchorage here is fair, except when the
504 strong
13 wind is from the S.E.to N.E. A better anchorage may be found in the lee of the island. Good paths traverse the island and its slopes are
487 thickly planted with cocoanut palms. Water is fairly abundant, there
312 being several wells.

Mr. Steinmetz has kept careful meteorological records for the
127 past 29 years (1924). A summary of his rainfall data is given in the introduction.

464 There is no native population on the island other than the workmen.
161 er
It formally possessed native inhabitants, however, and bones and ethno-
[172] logical objects have been dug up about the homestead.

[p.75]

13 56. NAITAUMBA is a trapezium-shape volcanic and limestone island, lying 15 miles N.W. of Vanua Mbalavu and 18 miles S.W.of Wailangilala. It is surrounded by a barrier reef which lies from 1/4 to 3/4 mile off shore. On the west the reef is reduced to a line of coral heads and patches. Here small boats may enter. Vessels may anchor, with an off shore wind, on a narrow shelf off this west side.

The island is 2 miles N.& E. by 1 1/2 miles N.& S. A central basin is surrounded by limestone and volcanic hills, the highest, on the S.E., reaching an elevation of 610 feet in a flat-topped volcanic peak rising with steep slopes. The limestone portions, especially on the N.E. and N.W. are densely wooded; the volcanic hills are covered with the usual grass, scrub and pandanus; and the basin contains an extensive grove of coconut palms.

423 361 245 312 The island is privately owned by Mr.G.M.Henning, who resides at a homestead on the west side. Considerable copra is produced. Fresh water is abundant, and small quantities of produce, turkeys, etc., might be obtainable at the homestead. Good trails traverse the island.

487 161 469 There is no native population other than the plantation workmen.

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13 The MALIMA Islets, two small uninhabited islets lying 6 miles S.E. of Naitaumba, were not visited. They are surrounded by a continuous circular barrier reef, about 2 miles in diameter, with a small boat passage on the north side. The larger islet reaches a height of 130 feet in a conspicuous lump on its S.W. end. The lagoon contains numerous rocks and coral heads.

[p.83]

13
[103] 40. VATU VARA I. (or Hat island, because of its resemblence, in profile from the E. and W., to a slouch hat) lies 9 miles south of Yathata. (S.17° 26', 179° 32' W.) It is surrounded by a fringing reef with a small shallow lagoon on the west. This island is the highest in Lau, the bold central peak rising to a height of 1030 feet. The slopes
[172] of this peak rise percipitously to a flat, crater-like summit, where the
[712] ruins of a fortified village are located.

The island is sub-circular, about 1 1/4 miles in diameter, with a square point on the S.E. It is composed of upraised coral limestone, densely wooded, and with small groves of coconut palms in pockets around
423 the foot of the talis slopes, and on the beaches. It is privately owned
361 by the estate of the late Captain Wilson. The neat, substantial home-
245 stead is located on the west side. Copra is produced.

13
502 Landing may be made without difficulty on a sand beach on the N. side, thru a small break in the reef, marked by a beacon.

464
161 There are no inhabitants except the caretaker and a few workmen.
312 Water is not abundant, and but little cultivation is done.
241

[p.88]